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Remarks

The Examiner has objected to claim 21 and suggested an amendment thereto which has been incorporated in the instant amendment. Review and acceptance is requested.

Claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 USC 112 second paragraph as being indefinite since there is improper antecedent basis for the recitation of "said welding joint". The enclosed amendment addresses this problem. Review and acceptance is requested.

Claims 1 through 6 and 13, 14 as well as 16 through 22 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ernst '633. The Examiner has, however, indicated that claims 7 through 10 and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner has also indicated allowability of claims 23 and 24, after proper amendment to claim 21.

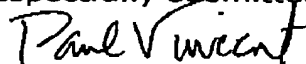
In response to this Office Action, the Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable claim 7, thereby rendering claim 1 allowable. Claim 7 has accordingly been cancelled. Moreover, the Applicant submits amended claim 17 and new claim 25. Claim 17 includes the limitations of allowable claim 23 and intervening claims 22, 21, 20, 19 as well as base claim 17, and new claim 25 includes the limitations of allowable claim 24 with the intervening claims and base claim 17. Claims 17 and 25 are therefore allowable. Claims 19 through 24 have accordingly been cancelled. The remaining dependent claims of record are dependent on an allowable base claim and are therefore similarly allowable.

The Applicant considers this amendment to be fully responsive to all remaining issues in this case and to place the application in a position for allowance. Entry of amendment and passage to issuance is therefore respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

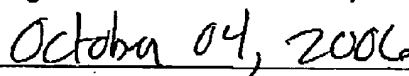
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Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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